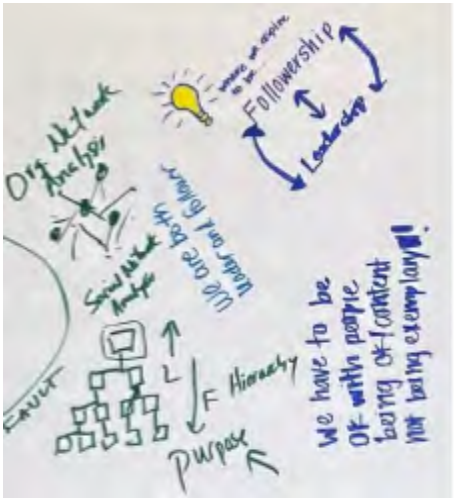
Sustaining & Reimagining Followership Discourse(s) for the Future
2023 ALE Conference Workshop Summary

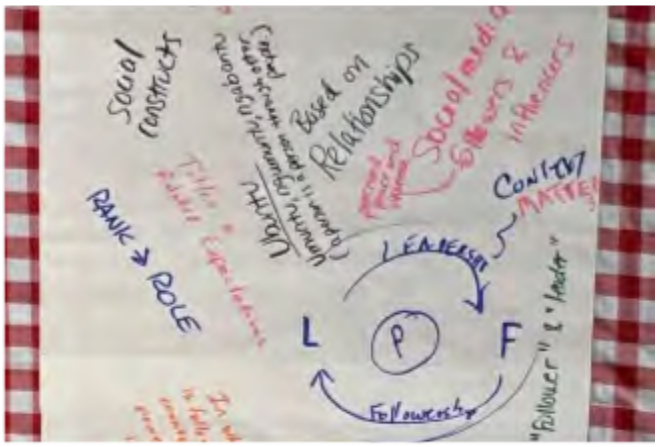
On July 18, 2023, as part of the Association of Leadership Educators (ALE) conference, eight individuals contributed to a session on "Sustaining and Reimagining Followership Discourse(s) for the Future." It was facilitated by Eric Kaufman and Israel Oyedare. A copy of the session proposal and related slides are publicly available at: https://hdl.handle.net/10919/115813

As part of the session, participants were invited to comment on and contribute to three published timelines related to leadership and followership: "Leadership Through the Ages" (Harrison, 2012), "Taxonomic Organizational Branching for Ancient worlds Versus modernity" (Markham, 2012), and "Important Theoretical Milestones in the Evolution of the Role of Followers in Leadership Research" (Oc. et al., 2023). The ideas captured were transcribed and are displayed in the appendices of this document.

Following the gallery walk of the timelines, participants engaged in a World Café dialogue surrounding the following question: "What are the characteristics of and influencing factors of followership discourse (or social implicit theory)?" As the group reflected on the café conversations, they surfaced the following themes and considerations: Relationship; Bias + Stigmas; Connotations of terms; Flaws in leadership; Network Analysis; Hierarchy; Ying vs Yang; Social Constructs; What is the ideal?; What is healthy?; Social media + Collective power; Influencer as career choice; Symbiotic relationships; Exemplary leaders + followers; How does it happen or work?; Network Discourse; and Engagement Discourse.

Participants expressed appreciation for the conversation, as noted in the following post-session survey response: "Wonderful conversation. Insightful. Left me with much to ponder."



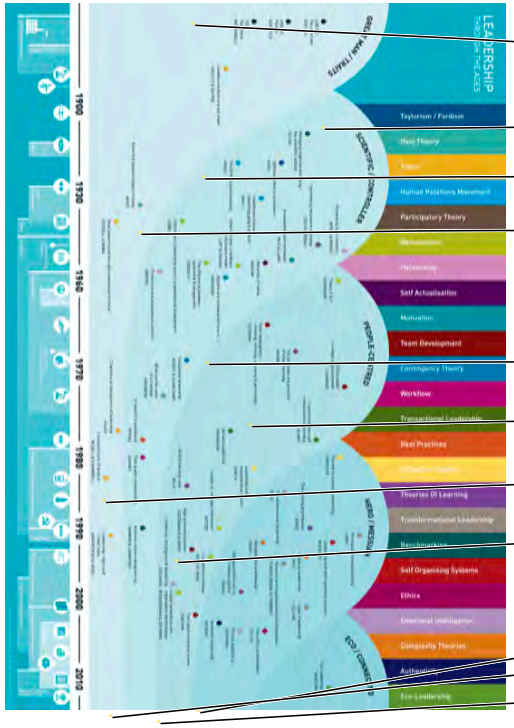


References

Markham, S. E. (2012). The evolution of organizations and leadership from the ancient world to modernity: A multilevel approach to organizational science and leadership (OSL). *The Leadership Quarterly*, *23*(6), 1134-1151. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.10.011

Harrison, J. (2012). *Leadership through the ages*. Mzuri Design Limited.

Oc, B., Chintakananda, K., Bashshur, M. R., & Day, D. V. (2023). The study of followers in leadership research: A systematic and critical review. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *34*(1), 101674. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2022.101674



ALE 2023 Comments on Leadership Through the Ages

Prophet, Priest, King - Ancient World + e.g. Israel

Frederick the Great, Prussian Military, Staff/LDNE

"Contrary voices" e.g. Mary Parker Follet power with

Military Leadership
- Interwar years
- Eisenhower
- Clausewitz
- Nimitz

Systems Theory - other things (e.g. followers) important

Empathic Leadership

Lessons a new generation - looking to the past (Abe Lincoln, Attilia the Hun)

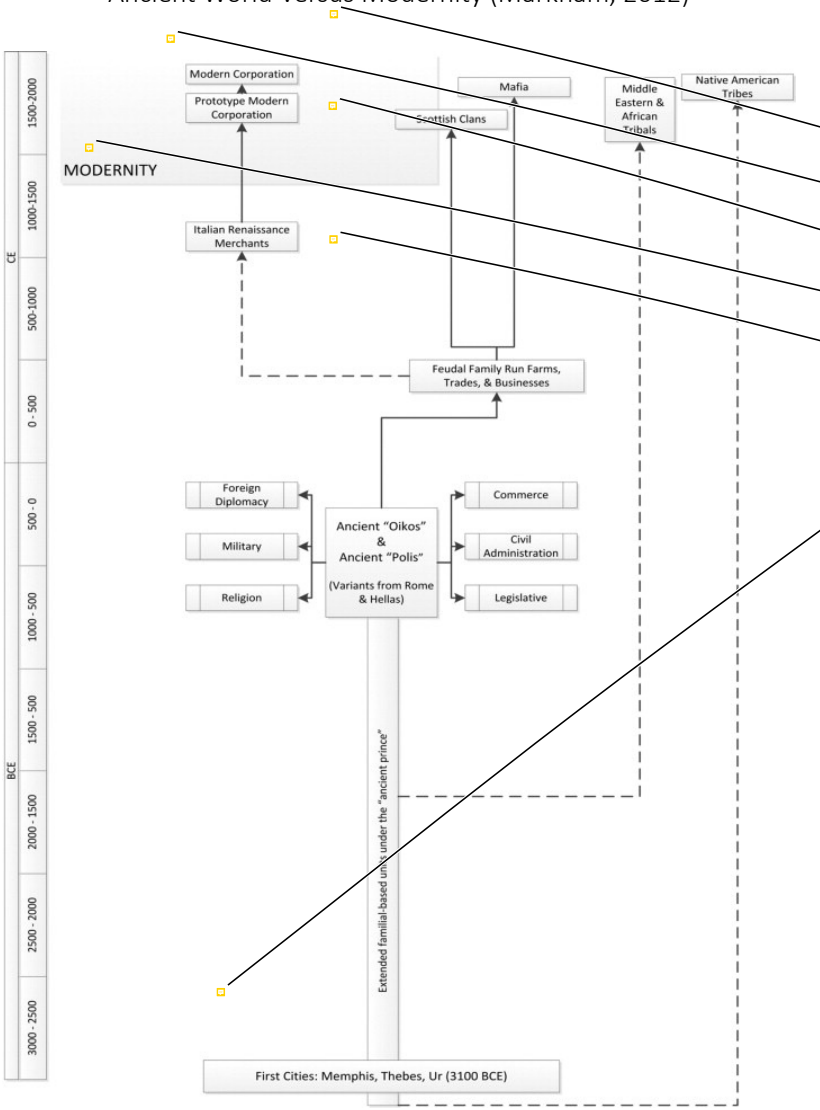
Growth Kindset +Dweck

Influencer Era

2015 - Rise in Nationalism

COVID-19

Taxonomic Organizational Branching for Ancient World Versus Modernity (Markham, 2012)



Note. From "The evolution of organizations and leadership from the ancient world to modernity: A multilevel approach to organizational science and leadership (OSL)," by S. E. Markham, 2012, *The Leadership Quarterly*, *23*(6), p.1145 (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.10.011). Copyright 2012 by Elsevier.

ALE 2023 Comments on Taxanomic Organizational Branching

Entrepreneurial or "loosely organized" systems

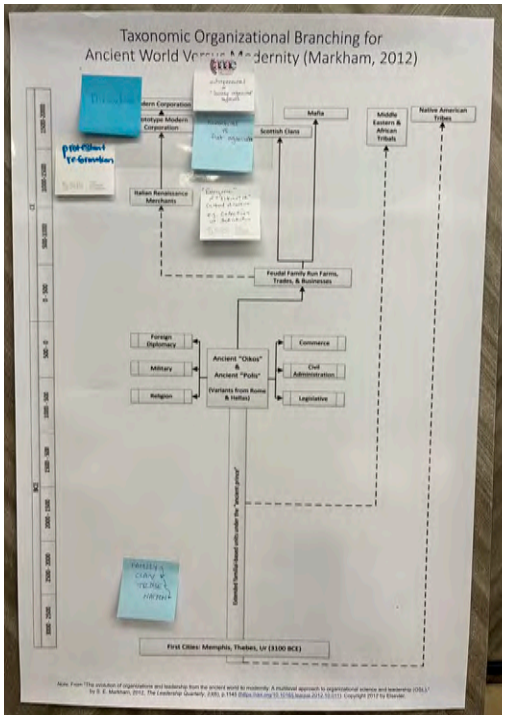
Disruptors

hierarchical vs flat organization

protestant reformation

"Emergence" of "Alternative" cultural dimensions
e.g. Collectivism vs Individualism

Family -< Clan -< Tribe -< Nation



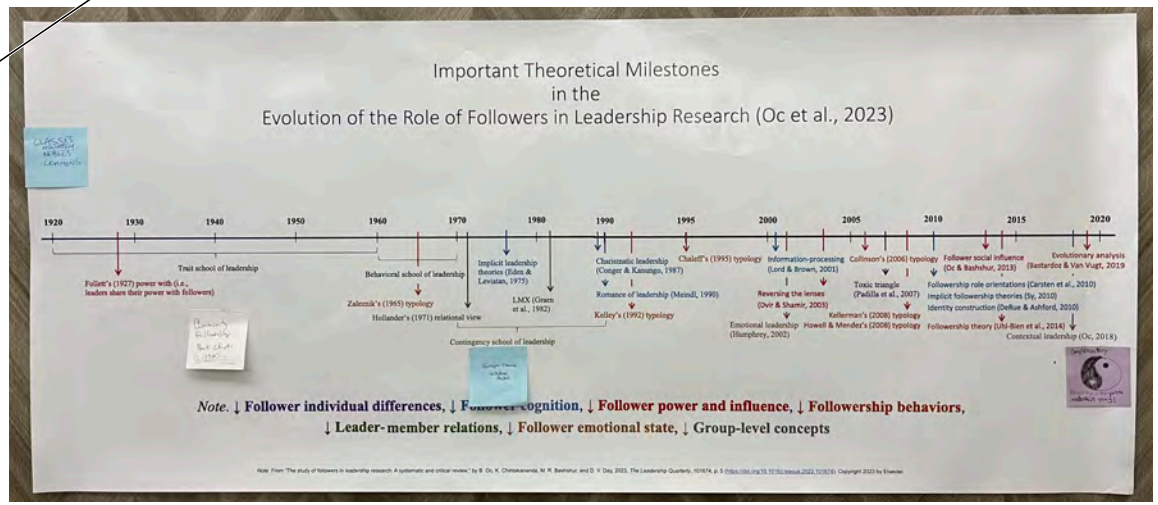
ALE 2023 Comments on Followership Timeline

Classes
Monarch
Nobles
Commons

Community Followership
Book Chapter
1940

Group + Teams
contextual factors

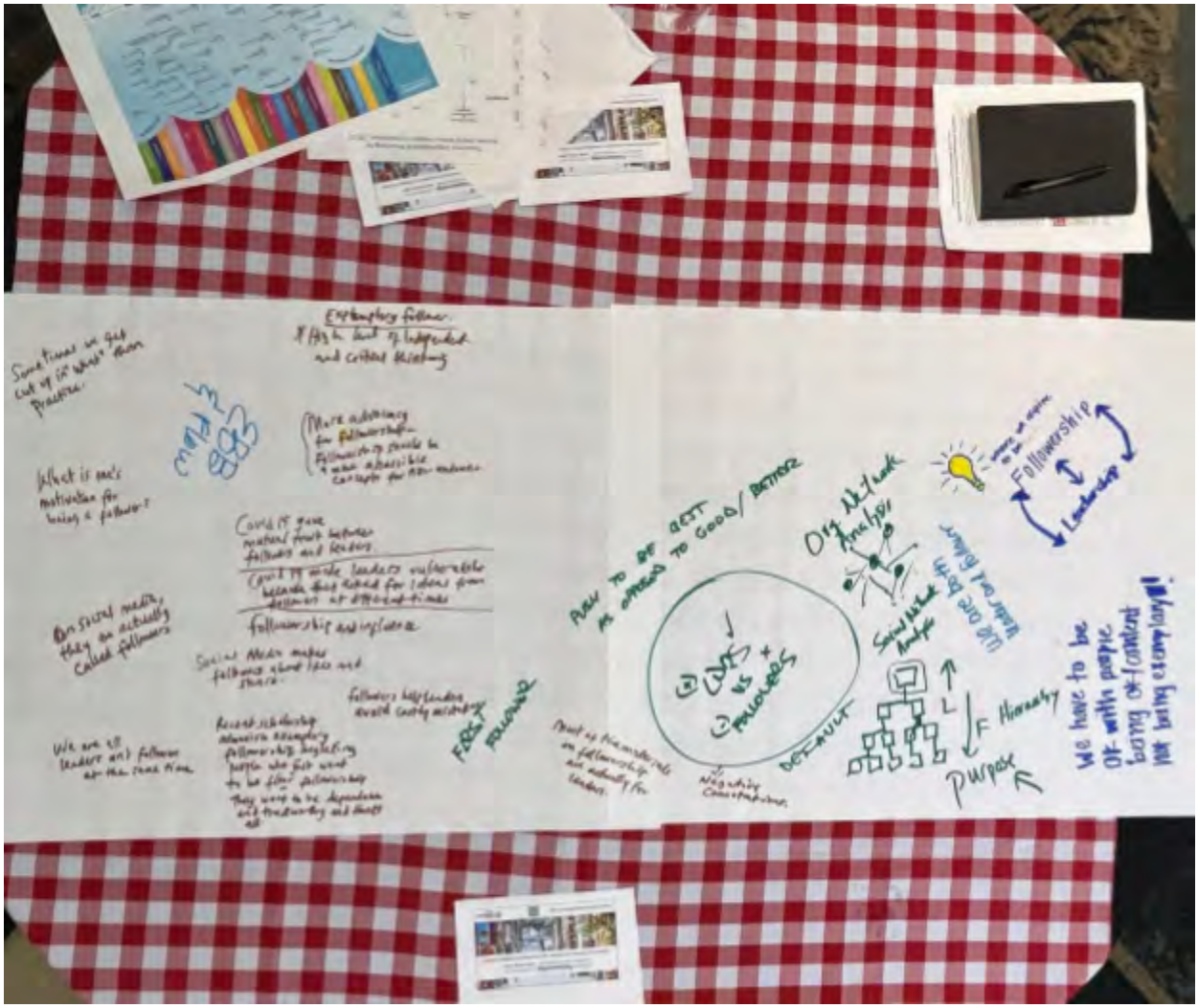
Complementary
Followership is the yin to leadership's yang!



Important Theoretical Milestones
in the
Evolution of the Role of Followers in Leadership Research (Oc et al., 2023)

Note. ↓ Follower individual differences, ↓ Follower cognition, ↓ Follower power and influence, ↓ Followership behaviors,
↓ Leader- member relations, ↓ Follower emotional state, ↓ Group-level concepts

ALE 2023 Conference World Café Table 1: *"Social Network Analysis", "Organization Network Analysis", "Hierarchy", "Purpose", "We are both Leader and Follower", "We have to be okay with people being okay or content not being exemplary", "There is a space where we aspire to be", "Push to be best as opposed to good/better", "By default (Negative Connotation) = LDRS(+) vs Followers (-)", "First follower", "Ebb & Flow", "Sometimes we get cut up in 'what' than practice", "What is one's motivation for being a follower", "On social media, they are actually called followers", "Recent scholarship admonish exemplary followership, neglecting people who just want to be floor followers: they want to be dependable and trustworthy, and that's all", "Followers help leaders avoid costly mistakes", "Social media makes followers about likes and share", "More advocacy for followership - Followership should be a more accessible concept for non-academics", "Exemplary follower: High level of independent and critical thinking", "COVID 19 gave mutual trust between followers and leaders", "Covid 19 made leaders vulnerable because they asked for ideas from followers at different times", "Followership and Influence".*



ALE 2023 Conference World Café Table 2: *"Individual vs Collective", "Always present contrary followers", "Idea that money and success is tied to influence (leading)", "Purpose (Engagement + Constructive challenge Collaboration + Leading and other supports + Independent Critical Thinking)", "TL - TR - LF - Pro A - A - P", "Followership is the yin to leadership's yang", "Stigmas attached to the labels 'follower' and 'leader' + Judgement", "In what ways is followership a counter balance to power structures in leadership?", "Purpose brings leadership and followership, however context matters", "Titles + Related Expectations", "Rank equals Role", "Reward + Success", "Covid-19", "Ego edging others out", "Social construct", "Social media followers and influencers - Perceived power and influence", "Based on Relationships", "both/and (L/F)", "Ubuntu - Umuntu, Ngumuntu, Ngabantu (a person is a person through other people)".*